

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-07 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00
AID-05 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /087 W
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R 210931Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3580
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2372

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EGEN, PINS, ET
SUBJ: EPMG APPARENTLY PLANNING MAJOR CONVOY MOVEMENTS FROM ADDIS
TO GONDAR AND TIGRE

1. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT DR. ASHAGRE YIGLETU, MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM HELD A MEETING WITH ALL PETROLEUM DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES ON MONDAY, APRIL 18. AT THE MEETING DR. ASHAGRE INSTRUCTED THESE COMPANIES TO FILL ALL SERVICE STATIONS AS FAR NOTH AS POSSIBLE ON THE ADDIS ABABA-DEBRE MARKOS-GONDAR ROAD, AND THE ADDIS ABABA-DESSIE-MEKELE ROAD. AFTER THESE SERVICE STATIONS HAVE BEEN FULLY SUPPLIED THEY WILL BE PERMITTED TO SELL PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TO LOCAL CUSTOMERS UNTIL 50 PERCENT OF THEIR STORAGE CAPACITY HAS BEEN USED WHEREUPON THEY MUST CURTAIL SALES UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN REPLENISHED. DR. ASHAGRE SAID THAT THE REQUIREMENT FOR INCREASED DELIVERIES TO THESE AREAS RELATED TO IMMINENT LARGE CONVOY MOVEMENTS.

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2. THE APRIL 21 ETHIOPIAN HERALD CARRIES A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE URGING URBAN DWELLERS' ASSOCIATIONS, PEASANTS' ASSOCIATIONS, TRADE UNIONS, SELF-HELP ASSOCIATIONS, GOVT ORGANIZATIONS, MOSQUES AND CHURCHES TO PROVIDE ANY TENTS THEY MAY HAVE AVAILABLE TO THE NEAREST MUNICIPALITY IN LESS THAN FIVE DAYS.

3. COMMENT:

A. APPARENTLY THE EPMG IS MOVING FORWARD WITH PLANS FOR MAJOR MOVEMENTS OF MEN AND MATERIEL TO THE FORMER BEGEMDIR, RECENTLY RENAMED GONDAR, AND TIGRE REGIONS. THE EMBASSY SO FAR HAS NO COLLATERAL INFO REGARDING THE NATURE OF THESE CONVOYS NOR THE TYPE OF PERSONNEL TO BE TRANSPORTED. NOT SURPRISINGLY, SOME OBSERVERS ARE PREDICTING ANOTHER RED MARCH BUT IN THE ABSENCE OF SUPPORTING INFO WE DOUBT THAT THIS IS THE PURPOSE OF THESE PREPARATIONS. IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT EITHER REGULAR TROOPS OR MILITARY GROUPS CURRENTLY IN TRAINING ARE TO BE TRANSFERRED TO THESE REGIONS.

B. ACCORDING TO PETROLEUM COMPANY SOURCES, THERE ARE EIGHT SERVICE STATIONS BETWEEN DEBRE MARKOS AND GONDAR AND TWLEVE BETWEEN KOMBOLCHA AND MEKELE, EACH STATION HAVING A CAPACITY OF ROUGHTLY 35,000 LITERS. AS SUPPLYING THESE STATIONS WILL NOT REQUIRE MANY TANK TRUCKS, DISRUPTIONS IN THE OVERALL PETROLEUM PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM ARE UNLIKELY.
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Message Attributes

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